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General Assembly

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Committee on Conferences
Organizational session for 2005

Annotated provisional agenda for the organizational session for 2005

1. Adoption of the agenda for the organizational session for 2005.
2. Election of officers.
3. Organization of work for 2005.
4. Programme of work for 2005.
5. Adoption of the agenda for the substantive session of 2005.
6. Other business.

Annotations

1. Adoption of the agenda for the organizational session for 2005

2. Election of officers

Rule 103 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly provides that committees other than Main Committees shall elect a Chairman, one or more Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. These officers shall be elected on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, experience and personal competence.

In past years, the Committee on Conferences has elected, in addition to the Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur.

3. Organization of work for 2005

At its 341st meeting, on 27 August 1992, the Committee decided to maintain its biennial programme of work, dealing with items relating to documentation in even-numbered years and those relating to meetings in odd-numbered years. The Committee also decided that some items would be considered on an annual basis. At its substantive session of 2004, the Committee discussed the issue of the biennialization of the item entitled "Pattern of conferences" in the General Assembly. At its fifty-ninth session, the Assembly took note of the comments of the

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Committee in paragraphs 56 to 60 of the report of the Secretary-General on the pattern of conferences (A/59/159) and decided to revert to the issue in the context of improving the working methods of the Fifth Committee.

4. Programme of work for 2005

The terms of reference of the Committee are set forth in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 43/222 B of 21 December 1988.

Annexed to the present document is a draft agenda for the substantive session of 2005, followed by annotations, which takes into account the earlier decisions of the Committee and subsequent decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly.

For the 2005 session, the reporting on different subjects concerning conference services will again be consolidated in two main reports: one on issues related mainly to the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/172), as requested in resolution 59/265 of 23 December 2004; and the other on the utilization of conference services and other matters regularly reported on under the pattern of conferences agenda item.

Although the agenda for the substantive session follows the resolutions under the pattern of conferences agenda item, the Committee may wish to organize its work along the lines of the topics listed above.

5. Adoption of the agenda for the substantive session of 2005

6. Other business

Annex

Draft agenda for the substantive session of 2005

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
2. Calendar of conferences and meetings:
   (a) Intersessional departures for 2005 and related matters;
   (b) Adoption of the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings for 2006-2007;
   (c) Improved utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities:
      (i) Meeting statistics of United Nations organs, and consultations with/letters to bodies concerning utilization of the conference services available to them;
      (ii) Provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States;
      (iii) Improved utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi;
      (iv) Improved utilization of the conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa;
   (d) Requests for exceptions to section I, paragraph 7, of General Assembly resolution 40/243;
   (e) Consideration of the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings of subsidiary organs of the Economic and Social Council for 2006-2007.
3. Improving the performance of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management:
   (a) Integrated global management;
   (b) Workload standards and performance measures;
   (c) Responsibility and accountability system in documents submission;
   (d) Provision of summary records;
   (e) Electronic tools and innovative ways and means to provide services to Member States.
4. Translation and interpretation-related matters.
5. Review of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007: Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.
6. Information technology.
7. Adoption of the report.

Annotations

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

2. Calendar of conferences and meetings

(a) Intersessional departures for 2005 and related matters

A compilation of such matters will be provided for inclusion in the report of the Committee.

(b) Adoption of the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings for 2006-2007

A draft calendar for the biennium 2006-2007 will be submitted by the Secretariat to the Committee on Conferences at its substantive session of 2005.

The Committee will submit to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings for 2006-2007.

(c) Improved utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities

(i) Meeting statistics of United Nations organs, and consultations with/letters to bodies concerning utilization of the conference services available to them

In section II.A, paragraph 2, of its resolution 59/265, the General Assembly requested the Committee on Conferences to continue to consult with those bodies that have consistently utilized less than the applicable benchmark figure of their allocated resources of the past three sessions with a view to making appropriate recommendations in order to achieve the optimum utilization of conference-servicing resources and urged the secretariats and bureaux of bodies that underutilize their conference-servicing resources, with the assistance of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of the Secretariat, to consider changes to their programme of work, as appropriate, based on previous patterns for recurring agenda items, with a view to making improvements in their utilization factors. In paragraph 3, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to conduct systematic follow-up regarding the utilization of conference services by those bodies that consistently underutilize their conference-servicing resources over a longer period of time in order to identify the underlying causes for their being unable to reach the benchmark.

(ii) Provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States

In section II.A, paragraph 15, of its resolution 59/265, the General Assembly recognized the importance of meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States for the smooth functioning of the sessions of intergovernmental bodies and requested the Secretary-General to ensure that, as far as possible, all requests for conference services for meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States are met. In paragraph 18, the Assembly recalled that meetings held by regional and other major groupings of Member States are provided with interpretation services on an ad hoc basis, in accordance with established practice. In paragraph 19, it requested the Secretary-General to review the current established

practice concerning the provision of interpretation services for meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States at Headquarters and other duty stations with a view to improving the provision of interpretation services to those meetings.

(iii) Improved utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi

In section II.A, paragraph 5, of its resolution 59/265, the General Assembly welcomed the efforts that are being made to improve the utilization of the conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi. In paragraph 6, it reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to continue to intensify the marketing efforts being made by the United Nations Office at Nairobi to attract more meetings to its facilities. In paragraph 7, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that conference management services at the United Nations Office at Nairobi are in line with other duty stations, taking into account the operational requirements of the Office, and to submit a report thereon to the Assembly at its sixtieth session for its consideration.

In paragraph 8, the General Assembly recalled its several resolutions, including resolution 57/283 B, section II.A, paragraph 9, and reaffirmed that all meetings of Nairobi-based United Nations bodies shall take place in Nairobi, except as otherwise authorized by the Assembly or the Committee on Conferences acting on its behalf, and requested the Secretary-General to report on the subject to the Assembly at its sixtieth session through the Committee on Conferences. In paragraph 9, the Assembly strongly discouraged any invitation to host meetings that would violate the headquarters rule, in particular for the United Nations Office at Nairobi and other United Nations centres with a low utilization level. In paragraph 10, it expressed deep concern over the remaining vacancies in the interpretation and translation services, in particular at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, noted the efforts of the Secretary-General to fill the vacancies and requested the Secretary-General to continue to report thereon to the Assembly through the Committee on Conferences.

(iv) Improved utilization of the conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa

In section II.A, paragraph 11, of its resolution 59/265, the General Assembly noted the improvements in the utilization of the conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa in response to section II.A, paragraph 1, of its resolution 58/250 and requested the Secretary-General to continue to explore all possible options to increase further the utilization of the conference centre. In paragraph 12, the Assembly welcomed the efforts so far undertaken to increase utilization and to make more efficient use of the conference facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa and urged the Secretary-General to sustain the marketing campaign efforts and to report on the outcome to the Assembly at its sixtieth session. In paragraph 13, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa establishes and develops linkages with other centres and bodies, introduces and utilizes an integrated conference management system and considers the implementation of other modern technology systems, as appropriate, for a more efficient delivery of services and to report thereon to the Assembly at its sixtieth session.

(d) Requests for exceptions to section I, paragraph 7, of General Assembly resolution 40/243

In paragraph 15 of its resolution 47/202 A of 22 December 1992, the General Assembly demanded that all subsidiary organs of the Assembly comply with the provisions of section I, paragraph 7, of its resolution 40/243, in which it had decided that no subsidiary organ of the Assembly would meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

In accordance with the procedure established by the Committee at its 1986 session and reaffirmed at its 1992 session, chairpersons of subsidiary organs of the General Assembly that wish to meet at Headquarters during the main part of the Assembly submit their requests to the Chairperson of the Committee.

(e) Consideration of the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings of subsidiary organs of the Economic and Social Council for 2006-2007

The Economic and Social Council, in its decision 1998/103 of 5 February 1988, decided to invite the Committee to review the Council's draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings and to submit, as appropriate, its recommendations thereon to the Council. The draft calendar for the biennium 2006-2007, which is to be presented to the Council at its substantive session of 2005 in July, is expected to be available for consideration by the Committee before the substantive session of the Council. The Committee may wish to consider meeting at that time in order to discuss the draft and to convey its observations to the Council.

3. Improving the performance of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management

(a) Integrated global management

The Committee, during its past three substantive sessions, discussed the subject of integrating global management in many details and made recommendations that provided guidance for the Secretariat in the implementation of the reform of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. In section II.B, paragraph 9, of its resolution 59/265, the General Assembly noted the ongoing efforts towards the establishment of the integrated global management system and decided to consider at its sixtieth session the current outcomes in the light of the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on this issue (see A/59/133 and Corr.1).

(b) Workload standards and performance measures

In section II.B, paragraph 10, of its resolution 59/265, the General Assembly noted the establishment by the Secretary-General of a Secretariat task force to conduct a comprehensive study of workload standards and performance measurement and the preliminary findings of the task force and requested the Secretary-General to pursue the study of workload standards and performance measurement, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, with a view to submitting to the Assembly a proposal for a comprehensive methodology for performance measurement and management from a full-system perspective, while also paying attention to the specificities of all the official languages and ensuring compliance with resolution 58/250.

(c) Responsibility and accountability system in documents submission

In section II.B, paragraph 11, of its resolution 59/265, the General Assembly reiterated its request that the Secretary-General develop further effective measures to strengthen the responsibility and accountability system within the Secretariat, including the establishment of an interdepartmental mechanism to monitor the process in order to ensure the timely submission of documents for processing and that he report comprehensively thereon to the Assembly at its sixtieth session through the Committee on Conferences.

(d) Provision of summary records

In section II.B, paragraph 12, of its resolution 59/265, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to pursue the delivery of summary records, a useful and vital tool for Member States, in particular in maintaining the institutional memory of the Organization, in a more efficient and cost-effective manner in full consultation with all the relevant intergovernmental bodies. In paragraph 13, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to examine the option of setting a time frame for the publication of summary records, to study the related practical and financial implications and to present a pilot project to the Assembly at its sixtieth session. In paragraph 14, the Assembly further requested the Secretary-General to elaborate on all options, including those set out in paragraphs 59 to 63 of his report (A/58/530), in accordance with legislative mandates, and to report on their practical and financial implications to the Assembly at its sixtieth session through the Committee on Conferences.

(e) Electronic tools and innovative ways and means to provide services to Member States

In section II.B, paragraph 15, of its resolution 59/265, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to develop further the functions of the Electronic Meetings Planning and Resource Allocation System (e-Meets) as the central tool for managing meetings to cover the entire spectrum of meeting-related activities and to continue its consultations with other duty stations in order to expand its application across duty stations, or to integrate the system into other systems used in such offices. In paragraph 16, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to implement further the electronic documentation management concept (e-Docs), including the actual electronic transmission of documents through the documentation chain.

In paragraph 17, the Assembly further requested the Secretary-General to enhance the use of printing on demand for parliamentary documentation as a means of improving services provided to Member States, in full compliance with current legislative mandates, on the basis of experience gained and lessons learned, taking fully into account the special needs of developing countries and the views expressed by Member States, to consider the use of printing on demand for publications, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its sixtieth session through the Committee on Conferences.

4. Translation and interpretation-related matters

In section IV, paragraph 2, of its resolution 59/265, the General Assembly noted with appreciation the continued practice of holding informational meetings with

Member States to consult with them on the improvement of the language services and the intention to establish additional channels for communication on the terminology used and the quality of services rendered and requested the Secretary-General to organize informational meetings twice a year and in a more appropriate setting, with interpretation provided on an as-available basis. In paragraph 4, the Assembly reiterated its request that the Secretary-General continue the efforts to explore the use of new technologies, such as computer-assisted translation, remote and off-site translation and speech recognition, in the six official languages so as to enhance further the quality and productivity of the conference services and to keep the Assembly informed of the introduction of any other new technology. In paragraph 5, the Assembly expressed deep concern for the high level of self-revision and requested the Secretary-General to present a comprehensive report on the matter to the Assembly at its sixtieth session through the Committee on Conferences. In paragraph 6, the Assembly reiterated its request to the Secretary-General, in updating the workload standards, to address the question of the appropriate level of self-revision that is consistent with quality in all official languages and to report thereon to the Assembly at its sixtieth session.

5. Review of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007: Department for General Assembly and Conference Management

At its 327th meeting, on 12 June 1991, the Committee on Conferences decided to review the relevant programme narrative of the proposed programme budget for conference services and to provide its views thereon to the General Assembly.

In the light of that decision, the Secretariat will submit to the Committee, for consideration at its substantive session of 2005, the relevant programme narrative of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.

6. Information technology

In section V, paragraph 1, of its resolution 59/265, the General Assembly noted the progress achieved thus far across duty stations in integrating information technology into management and documentation-processing systems and the global approach to sharing standards, good practices and technological achievements among the conference services at all duty stations. In paragraph 2, it welcomed efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General at the United Nations Office at Nairobi to include the Office in sharing of standard, good practices and technological achievements with the other United Nations Offices, consistent with its operational requirements. In paragraph 3, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to intensify the efforts to strengthen the information technology capacity at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, to redeploy existing resources, as appropriate, to meet emerging priorities and to revert to this issue, as appropriate, in the context of the regular budget for the period 2006-2007.

7. Adoption of the report